WILLIAM MIDDLETON MORAGNE

THE WATUMULL FOUNDATION ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

William Middleton Moragne

(1905 -)

William Moragne was born in Hilo, Hawaii; graduated from Kauai High School and the University of Hawaii; married Jean Frances Widdifield; and has four children.

He was employed by the Grove Farm Company from 1928 until his retirement, except for a year when he was on loan to the Kauai Construction Company. He started as an engineer and ended as vice president and manager.

Mr. Moragne discusses his background and family history, his employment and experiences, and relates many anecdotes pertaining to Kauai.

Mrs. John A. Veech, Interviewer

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INTERVIEW WITH WILLIAM MIDDLETON MORAGNE

At his home in Lihue, Kauai 96766

July 13, 1971

M: William M. Moragne

V: Mrs. John Alexander Veech, Interviewer

V: Start all over again. I'm sorry.

M: This is Bill Moragne on July 13, 1971 in Lihue, Kauai. I was born here in the Islands on the Island of Hawaii, February 17, 1905. My parents had a little homestead outside of Hilo and I was actually born in the hospital in Hilo.

My dad was at that time a contractor, clearing land for cane growing along the Hilo coast. He brought lumberjacks in from various parts of the West and had a regular timber-clearing operation. He cleared a considerable area.

V: They always call you The Frenchman. Is your father really French, or did he come from. . . ?

M: No, no. The comment here is they always call me The Frenchman. The nickname is French because my name, Moragne, actually should be pronounced Mo-ran-yuh with an accent [on the second syllable], as it is in France. [The name Mor-agne has the same ending as Cham-pagne but in Hawaii is pronounced Mor-ā-nē, with an accent on the "a."]

My great-great-grandparents were French Huguenots who escaped from France to England and then to the southern states in the early days.

Dad came to Hawaii first as a civil engineer with the American Army during the Spanish-American War [of 1898]. They put out a request for volunteer engineers and on the basis that he could retire or resign whenever he wished to, he joined and was being sent to the Philippines. When they arrived in Hawaii in 1898, they received word here that the Spanish-American War was over so Dad immediately resigned and decided to live here in Hawaii.

V: Where did he take his civil engineering work, do you know? (long pause) Well, it isn't important. I'm just curious.

M: Yes, I do know. He took civil engineering at Auburn University in Auburn, Alabama.

V: Um hm. When he decided to stay here, had he married locally or was that to come later?

M: No. Yes, Dad's first job here in Hawaii was working with Whitehouse--a fellow by the name of Whitehouse--and they built the Nuuanu reservoir. The reservoir is still in existence and at that time it served a real purpose to the City of Honolulu, but the water supply was subsequently replaced by artesian water.

Dad later went to Hawaii and then, in 1905, came to Kauai to install the ditch system--a collective system--for the Wainiha Power Plant. He landed at Wainiha Bay. At that time there was a little pier running out into the Wainiha Bay and the remnants of that pier remained for many years, perhaps forty to fifty years. They're all gone now. On completion of the ditch system, Dad joined the county as county engineer in approximately 1910 and from then on, till 1917, actually built and paved the first road from Wainiha to Mana.

V: The first belt road then, really.

M: The first belt road. Practically the whole road was built by my dad and paved. It had never been paved before. It was paved with what was then called a water-bound macadam, which was later oiled when oil became available, and asphalted after that. Practically all the bridges--<u>all</u> the bridges--from one end of the island to the other were designed and built by my dad during that period.

V: Now you can answer a question I've always wanted to know. Why are all the bridges crooked? They always call Mr.--Bill Moragne's father's bridges are always crooked when you approach them. Is that to slow traffic down or just because it was easier engineering or what? Or do you know?

M: No, they're not crooked; they're narrow.

V: Yeh, but I mean the entrance is always at an angle as you go across.

M: Oh, well the reason for the angles and the twists in the road were for the economy's sake. The total budget for road and bridge building during that period was $40,000 a year. Now, when considered with modern cost, why, you can't even make up a set of plans for $40,000. It was

quite a feat. He had a traveling pressing plant and equipment which moved from one end of the island to the other, gradually building roads; using local labor, mostly Hawaiians, steam engines when they became available for hauling rock; prior to that, using dump carts with oxen and horses or whatever was available. Is that loud enough?

V: I can hardly. . . (recorder is turned off and on again, then there are microphone noises, and their voices are distorted, as they have been almost from the beginning of the tape, due to weak batteries in the recorder probably) Okay, doing very nicely.

M: The shortest way across the rivers was at a right angle in the direction of flow in most cases and for that reason the bridges were built in the shortest direction for economy's sake. Remember, now, that the roads were being built for horse and buggy traffic and not for automobiles. The automobile was just being brought up here in Hawaii at that time. In fact, there were only one or two on the island. Both the horse and buggy and the automobile traveled at a slow pace in those days and a right angle turn at a bridge was not really an inconvenience to the traffic.

V: I wasn't criticizing, Bill. I've just always been curious about why it was that way.

M: That's why. Traffic flow was very slow.

V: Speaking of automobiles, do you know who had the first automobile on the island?

M: Yes, the first automobile was brought here to the Islands by G. N. [George Norton] Wilcox and he brought it in one day, it landed, and he drove it up to his home, invited the community to come and see this new, wonderful piece of equipment, which it was--one of the old--I'm just thinking back--it was a Hupmobile, with a buggy front and a steering stick rather than a wheel. One of the individuals invited to look over the car was a man by the name of John Ashton Hogg. H-O-G-G. He was quite a mechanic in his day, quite a tinkerer, a very intelligent individual; one, for instance, who started the first gas works, started the first telephone system, started the first garage on Kauai. (loud airplane noise in the background while he speaks makes the following portion indistinct)

John Hogg managed, by tinkering a little here and a little there just on what he knew, to fix it so that when G. N. Wilcox climbed in to demonstrate how it was started and driven, it wouldn't start and it wouldn't drive. And in complete disgust, Wilcox turned to Hogg and said, "Take

this car home with you. I don't want it. You saw that it won't run. You might as well have it." And so that's how Hogg got into the automobile repair business and that's how he got his first car.

And incidently, that same Hupmobile was the means of transportation for us local youngsters. As we grew older, the older boys learned to drive and we all traveled around together in this Hupmobile. It was interesting and the roads in those days were still pretty rough in spots and steep and it was quite a common thing to have to get out and help push the Hupmobile up some of the steeper grades. It was also understood that any trip, especially as far as Hanalei, would require that we carry something for the changing of two or three tires. Never could we travel all the way to Hanalei, all the way to Waimea, without at least two or three flat tires.

V: But you stopped and did your thing right there.

M: We stopped. . .

V: What do you call it, patched?

M: Patched. We stopped and took the tubes out from the tires, patched them and when the patch was dry, put them back again and pumped them up and off we went again. We all chipped in with all the spare cash we had to buy tires. They were expensive. Most of them, as I recall, were Michelin, tires made in France, and for our jet set they were quite an investment. However, it was a wonderful thing to have this transportation, in addition to having horses which we rode and horses and buggies which were family vehicles.

V: Before we get to you and your schooling, let's go back to your father's marriage and who else was in your family.

M: (chuckles) When on the Island of Hawaii before coming to Kauai, he married Mary Chalmers who was from Scotland and was teaching school at Laupahoehoe on the Island of Hawaii. Mother had two brothers on Hawaii who were plantation managers and she was out visiting them when she met [my father]. The year was 1902 when they were married.

My family consisted of my older sister, Josephine, who was born in 1904; myself, born in 1905; and my sister, Catherine, who was born in 1909.

V: Where are Catherine and Josephine now?

M: Josephine married an attorney [Mynderse van Hoesen], now retired, who was legal counsel for Bechtel Corporation and

who is now retired and lives in Hillsborough, California.

Catherine married an attorney, George Willis, who is now retired and lives in Texas. Both sisters have families now living on the mainland.

Do you want me to go any further into the family?

V: I don't think so. (her next question is unintelligible due to voice distortion)

M: Dad moved to Wainiha in 1905, the year I was born, and he lived in that neighborhood for awhile and then the family --Mother and my sisters and I--moved over to Kauai in 1907. My family lived in a little cottage adjacent to the old Grove Farm shop location and we lived there until 1911 and then moved down the road about a mile and a half to another family residence on the other side.

I went to school at first at the Lihue Private School. In those days, the schools were few and far between and the public schools were just getting started. This was a little private school that had been going for awhile. At the time I went, the teacher's name was Miss Albright--Fanny Albright, and the school was located on the grounds of the Lihue Union Church. It is still there and is being used as a residence for the groundskeeper. The interesting part of the school was that grades one through eight were being taught in the same classroom by one teacher so that you started in with the first grade and went through the different grades, hearing each day what you'd already learned or were going to learn.

V: How many children, approximately?

M: There were approximately thirty-five of us, as I recall, and the proper age to start school was approximately seven years old.

V: Oh, that old? (recorder turned off and on again)

M: Miss Albright was a wonderful woman, well-liked by everyone and with extreme patience. She had quite a group to deal with. Many individual youngsters were quite conventional and then others were just the opposite in their behavior.

We all went to school either by walking or by horseback or by horse and buggy. No such thing as driving up to school in an automobile in those days.

V: Or school bus.

M: Or school bus. Walking was the chief means of transportation. We made our own fun, as it were; had our own games

and got into our own mischief. There was no such thing as television or radio or other forms of entertainment. In fact, there was only one moving picture a week if the movie happened to be on Kauai, otherwise, no evening entertainment.

The envy of the classroom was a little buggy that the Willie [William H.] Rice boys acquired from their parents. It was a highly painted red and yellow buggy without a top and a very sporty design, with two horses that drew it around. The horses that were attached to the buggy were attractive, medium-sized animals. I can still remember the three Rice boys climbing into their buggy and very happily driving off after school one day. Something scared the horses and they took off at top speed, turned the corner and spilled all the Rice boys out on the road.

V: (unintelligible due to voice distortion) Much to the others' great glee.

M: Much to the glee of the rest of the group.

V: (unintelligible)

M: We made our own fun in those days and some of it was rather mischievous. Just after Henry started the school--that's the private school--the Kauai High and Grammar School became a reality and I entered the fourth grade. I stayed there and graduated from the Kauai High School [in 1923] then I went to the University of Hawaii. My course was sugar technology, a special course in those days designed for the sugar industry. There were fewer than four hundred students at the university at that time and only two main buildings--Hawaii Hall and Gartley Hall [the first completed in 1912; the second, in 1922]. I stayed in the boys' dormitory which was a little below the campus.

Upon graduating from the University of Hawaii [in 1928], I came back to Kauai and I married Jean Frances Widdifield [on June 5, 1928] and after a honeymoon trip on the mainland we came back to live on Kauai. I joined Grove Farm Company as a civil engineer and remained so for quite a time [1928-38] and with the company until I retired [in 1969]. [He had majored in civil engineering.]

V: (unintelligible)

M: Jean Frances Widdifield's dad and mother were from Saskatchewan, Canada where they owned a farm. Jean's father came out to work in the sugar industry on the Island of Hawaii and finally at Kilauea Plantation on Kauai. Jean attended the Kauai High School and that's where I first met her.

V: I didn't know that. I thought you met on Oahu.

M: No.

V: (unintelligible)

M: Jean majored in home economics and taught school here on Kauai [Kauai High School, 1928-36 and 1941-43; Wilcox School, 1948-64]. Jean and I were married in 1928. We were married the day after she graduated from college. Actually she went through in three years in order to graduate in three years so I would be able to marry her.

V: So you could come back to Kauai together.

M: So we could come back to Kauai together, yes.

V: You went right to Grove Farm then.

M: Yes, I went to Grove Farm in 1928. During my university training, I stayed out one year to help my dad with a project in the upper Hanalei ditch system which reached as far as the Hanalei Valley Stream.

V: (unintelligible)

M: (unintelligible)

V: At that time, did your father quit the county government to work for the plantation?

M: Yes. Dad had stayed with the county until 1917, at which time he joined American Factors, in charge of all the irrigation projects for the American Factors' plantations on Kauai. And it was one of those projects that I stayed out to help him with.

V: (unintelligible)

M: I lived for at least six months up in the mountains, only occasionally getting back to civilization.

V: (unintelligible)

M: It meant living very quietly but it was very interesting work.

At Grove Farm Plantation, I worked as an engineer and gradually worked into agriculture as I became more interested in the planting aspects of sugar cane growing. My natural hobby is the growing of trees and plants and flowers of all types so it was very natural that I became in-

terested in growing sugar cane.

I remained engineer for several years and worked up to manager of operations in 1948 and full general manager in 1953, replacing Mr. Alexander who retired at that time.

V: (unintelligible) [William Patterson Alexander]

M: One of the big changes that took place on the plantation during my time was the merger between Grove Farm and the Koloa Sugar Company. At that time Grove Farm took over the Koloa Sugar Company lands and its operation. (the next sentence is unintelligible) The total production of Grove Farm Company in a good year, prior to 1948, was approximately eleven to twelve thousand tons of sugar. The total production of Koloa Sugar Company in the same period was about twelve thousand tons. Upon merging, they then had a twenty-four thousand ton plantation. During the ensuing years, we increased production until we were producing forty-two thousand tons of sugar.

V: It almost doubled.

M: Just prior to my retirement. A great deal of increased production was due to the increased land use (the following is unintelligible). . . . We developed machinery of all kinds on the plantation ourselves with our own crew in order to replace man power. And when one considers that the combined man power of the two plantations upon merger was approximately eleven hundred men and, on my retirement, approximately five hundred men, it speaks well for those who were willing tommake the effort to develop machinery to replace man power.

V: (unintelligible) (recorder is turned off and on again) You want to hold it (the microphone) in your hand?

M: Yes, I think so. Try it this way and see how it goes. (voices no longer distorted) Through the years we built many types of weed-cultivation equipment, which gave way to agricultural sprays and chemical sprays and spray equipment. We built a cane seed cutter which worked very well. We built the first cane planters and our final units were really excellent in their operation and labor-saving equipment. In fact, we built a complete seed cutting, handling, seed treating and trucking and loading and distribution outlay which used a total of five men where over twenty or twenty-five had been previously used. We designed and built a modern cleaning plant at the Koloa factory capable of processing 150 tons of cane per hour and actually built up our hauling capacity to a point where we were processing up to 125 tons per hour, this compared with the origi-

nal Koloa factory's capacity of twenty-five tons per hour for a maximum of sixteen hours per day.

Modern shops and modern equipment, along with modern large-capacity tractors and agricultural equipment, all improved man-power production to a point where we could eliminate man power through general attrition and get along very nicely without hiring a new man for years. There's lots of different equipment available now, modern hydraulic equipment and so on, which we didn't have.

V: I would suggest that he compare what he's just been saying to what it was like when he first went on the plantation when all of it was done by hand.

M: Um hm. (Jean Moragne says, "Yes, like I remember when he went out to see the first airplane that sprayed the field and had to get up at the crack of dawn.")

So much for my work on the plantation. It was fun and hard work at the same time and required many, many hours of homework in order to keep up the design of the new equipment and do my field work at the same time.

I'd like to drop back a ways into history, in that it was my privilege to see the first airplane flight on Kauai, one which very few people are aware of. In 1912 in August, a Chinese by the name of Tom Gunn brought a plane to Kauai and demonstrated his ability to fly it. The plane was one of the Wright brothers' types of biplane with two wings and had a very small gasoline engine mounted on a little platform above and behind the pilot. The pilot sat in a little bicycle seat practically out in the open between the wings. Tom Gunn flew from the Oma'o Hill, which was not in sugar cane at that time and was clear pasture. He flew several hundred feet in distance and perhaps at least a hundred feet in elevation before landing and it was a sight worth seeing. This being August 12th, I believe, in 1912, people from all over Kauai attended the demonstration. Most came by horseback or by horse and buggy. There were a few cars and actually one trainload from the Koloa Plantation made up a total of some five or six thousand paying observers, which was really quite a gathering for Kauai. As I recall, the tickets were five dollars per person, this being a fortune at that time.

V: He probably paid for the airplane.

M: Yes. Tom Gunn later tried to fly his plane with floats instead of wheels from the Poipu beach area. There was too much wave action, however, and he could not take off. The Koloa Plantation officials were afraid to let him fly from the Waika Reservoir, which would have been nice and smooth, as they were afraid the engine vibrations and wave

action might be dangerous to the reservoir dam. This, of course, sounds quite foolish but they were serious at that time.

I mentioned a while back that we did not have television or radios in those days. They were not available.

END OF SIDE 1/1ST TAPE

Let's see. What was I just saying now?

V: Your first experience with recorded voice with Edison.

M: Oh yeh, yeh, yeh, yeh--with Edison. Um hm. This was an Edison phonograph. The record was in the form of a cylinder and the megaphone was the speaker. The unit did play and, of course, was fascinating to all of us.

V: How old were you, do you remember?

M: At this time, as I recollect, I would have been approximately five years old. At this time my dad purchased his first automobile, which was a little buggy-front type of Ford, painted a bright red with a little engine under the seat. The engine was cranked from the side and my recollection of the car was that Dad spent eight or ten hours repairing this thing for every hour that he drove it. It was found that the horse and buggy was more dependable.

My next experience with voice was being a friend of the wireless station operator at Lihue. I believe his name was Dawes and he was wonderful with the younger generation. My friends Dick [Richard Hans] Rice and Percy Lydgate and I took radio lessons from Dawes and all learned the Morse Code fairly well. About the only thing I remember now is the SOS signal. This period would be somewhere in the neighborhood of 1915 or 1916. Dawes was very capable electronically and startled us one day with the news that people were able to speak over the air and their voices were heard directly instead of in the form of words through Morse Code. Dawes indicated that he had enough equipment lying around to rig up a broadcast unit and proceeded to do so. He asked us to come over to his office one day and on arrival we found him tuning up a contraption which was prepared to be mostly a series of tubes and bulbs and a loudspeaker. He went on the air saying, "This is radio station KAUAI calling in Lihue, Kauai. This is radio station KAUAI calling in Lihue, Kauai." He repeated this three or four times and then shut down. We asked him why he didn't say more and he said that he'd actually have to have a license before going on the air and was afraid to do so.

The interesting anecdote to this was that it wasn't

more than five minutes before Grandmother Rice called a radio station to the effect that she had heard a call over her radio that mentioned the fact that it was a station KAUAI calling but that no news was given. This was proof to us that Dawes was correct and that he could actually speak over the air, something which was unheard of.

Going back to the early telephones, I mentioned that John Ashton Hogg had installed the first telephones on Kauai. He actually did so and the telephone station--control station and central office--was a little cottage in the Hogg yard which we used to visit periodically to not only get the news but to listen in on the community gossip. Later, one of my good friends became one of the operating centrals on the night shift and this gave us an opportunity to know what was going on on Kauai somewhat in advance of the community.

The gas works that Hogg ran was before my time; however, there were remnants of the old gas plant in this same telephone building and some of the pipelines which ran over to the houses in the general vicinity. I don't believe that the gas works was ever too successful.

One of the developments which took place in the sugar industry just after the last World War was the advent of crop dusting and spraying for both fertilizer and weed control. The planes replaced a good percentage of the labor that was doing this type of work and were economical in this respect. Helicopters were tried; however, their capacity during my period was inadequate and they were never really practical. Modern helicopters should make this a more successful operation.

The war naturally found us all on Kauai somewhat unprepared, although they had a build-up of tension here and we did have an organization--an operable civilian defense organization in effect when the war broke. The 7th of December, which was a Sunday morning, brings back vivid memories to all of us who were here. At that time I happened to be assistant to the director of civilian defense, which was one of the jobs which a person took that would naturally not require much effort and which had to be done to do one's share in the community. This proved to be quite the opposite in my case, as there was very little sleep for a good many months after the war broke.

I recall arriving home one morning at about two-thirty and hearing shells exploding at Nawiliwili. I counted fourteen explosions and then, silence. There were several brilliant flares in the air over Nawiliwili and the dreaded thought passed through my mind that the Japanese had landed. When the shelling ceased after fourteen explosions, I decided that it must have been a submarine which had subsequently submerged and disappeared. This proved to be the case and on arriving at Nawiliwili at a-

bout three o'clock that morning, we found that they had been shelling the--shooting at the Shell Oil Company tanks in Nawiliwili Harbor. The Grove Farm canefields behind the tanks were on fire and after getting a crew together to extinguish the fires, we took a look at the damage to the tanks. We found one had been pierced by a shell which had entered one side just over the gasoline level and broken through the other side and had dropped back into the gasoline tank without exploding. The tank seams were all leaking and we canvassed the whole island by phone for tank trucks and barrels to save the gasoline, which we managed to do with very little loss.

We did have a little point of humor build up around this particular incident in that the hot shell did not set the gasoline on fire. This fact gave us the opportunity to kid the Shell Oil Company officials about selling us non-combustible gasoline.

The headquarters for the civilian defense was in the county building at Lihue and we subsequently built an underground headquarters in the side of the hill below Lihue. These headquarters were concrete-lined on the inside and had shells and living facilities. The tunnel approaches to the underground headquarters have been closed off and the area remains unknown to all of the public.

Going back to my family, Jean and I were fortunate in having four children--first, our son Bill, William Middleton Moragne, Jr., was born in 1935; our daughter Jean Mary Moragne was born in 1936; our daughter Sally Ann Moragne was born in 1944; and our daughter Catherine Josephine Moragne was born in 1946.

Bill married Jean Black whose father was at that time manager of Olokele Sugar Company here on Kauai. They have four children, two boys and two girls.

Mary married Samuel Alexander Cooke, son of Charlie and Edi Cooke [Edith Emma Sloggett and Charles Montague Cooke, III]. They have three girls.

Sally as yet has not been married. She teaches school on the Island of Oahu and will be teaching at Punahou [School] next year.

Our youngest daughter, Catherine Josephine, married Russell [S.] Bartmess of eastern Texas and they live in Glenview, Illinois. No family as yet, although there are prospects. [R.S. Bartmess is from Illinois, not Texas.]

Going back to our younger days when the comment was made that we made our own entertainment, we did a good deal of hunting and fishing and became quite adept at both. The slopes of Kilohana in the early days were purely grass, without brush or trees of any kind, and the pheasant hunting, wonderful. We did a great deal of pheasant hunting behind dogs and this was really keen sport, as well as great exercise. We did a lot of dove shooting; we hunted

wild goats in the Waimea Canyon and on the Napali Coast. We hunted wild pigs with dogs in the Kokee and upper Lihue areas. All this occupied weekends and we were rarely home on a weekend.

One of our interesting fishing trips would be the catching of sharks and we did this quite often, something almost unheard of in this day and age. Our method was to get an old goat, mule or horse that had died or was near death and we'd use the same as lure for the sharks. We used heavy shark hooks and heavy lines and invariably caught several good-sized sharks, some being as long as eighteen feet. Sharks were quite plentiful in island waters in those days, as they are today, and we were always quite cautious, more so than the modern youngster is, in checking for sharks before going in swimming. It was a customary practice in the early days to sit on the beach and watch the waves for fifteen or twenty minutes before going swimming to see if there were any sharks in the neighborhood. If we saw them in the waves, we went swimming elsewhere.

Surfing was practiced but was most difficult in view of the fact that we had only heavy wooden boards weighing as much as seventy-five, eighty or even a hundred pounds. These were very hard to paddle up to a high enough speed to catch a wave and we could only, in the early days, catch the largest waves. The sport was quite exhausting compared with the modern fiberglass and plastic foam board, which weighs only a few pounds--less than twenty-five pounds--and which is easy to bring up to surfing speed. Surfing in our days was a difficult maneuver and only those who lived in the best surfing areas, such as Waikiki, actually practiced the sport.

I'd like to skip back, now, to the agricultural operations here on Kauai. My first memories were naturally of the sugar industry, which was in operation in a small way and expanding quite rapidly. There was a great deal of rice production in the valley areas, practiced mostly by the Japanese and Chinese who had arrived here as immigrants. The areas had all previously been in taro and a small amount of taro remained as an indicator of the past. This later gave way entirely to rice which, in turn, disappeared when rice production in California and Texas became a big operation and when rice could be delivered to Hawaii from California at a lower cost than it could be produced locally.

It is interesting to note now that taro, the original crop, is slowly taking over its original growing areas and time may eventually bring it back to its original productive capacity. The use of taro and its by-products, especially poi for infant food, has made the taro industry a profitable one.

Commenting on the rice production, there were naturally a number of rice mills scattered over the island. I would like to comment on one of these which was on the Ahana property in Huleia Valley. This mill was made entirely of wood. The wooden water wheel was all pegged together with wood. It drove a wooden shaft which, in turn, turned wooden gears which, in turn, lifted wooden pounders and hulled the rice. It was a remarkable mill in that the craftsmanship in making up the gears and shafts and drives was certainly outstanding. It was of Chinese origin. I remember asking the Ahanas to preserve it or to let me know if they ever planned to remove it and it was a sad day when I drove down to the Ahana property a year or two later to see the mill completely torn down and burned up--all the parts burned up. It was useless to them and they just wanted to get it out of the way. This old mill would have been an outstanding attraction as a museum piece today.

One of my agricultural interests was the spreading of the lichee tree here on Kauai. In the early days there were only two trees growing, both of which were in the Wailua River valley in areas occupied by Chinese rice growers. I made arrangements with one of the growers to air layer a lichee tree for me. He agreed to do so for twenty-five dollars. This was in 1917 and twenty-five dollars was--and those twenty-five dollars were mighty big. The lichee was very slow in coming but finally after a year or two I received word that my tree was ready and I could go and get the same. This required a boat trip, rowing up the Wailua River, and I was extremely fortunate in that the airlayered tree was healthy and grew very well.

A few years later, Mr. H. W. Broadbent, then manager of Grove Farm, and I decided to try to propagate lichee trees to spread through the community. We built a humidity temperature-moisture control box and tried starting lichee cuttings. I operated the unit and installed some eighty cuttings which were still absolutely perfect in color and texture after ten months but which had not taken root. We were able to keep the cuttings alive and in good condition by control of the humidity and temperature. I often think that if we had had access to the modern tree-growing hormones, that we may have been quite successful with our first venture.

Having failed in our humidity box, we thought we would try the recognized citrus method of airlayering lichees, which had recently been developed in Florida, and the technique worked perfectly with the local lichee tree. We then made an arrangement with those that owned lichees on the island at that time. There were four trees in the Wailua Homestead area and one tree in my yard. The arrangement was that we would pay the tree owners five dol-

lars for every tree we were successful in air layering from their lichees.

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BEGINNING OF SIDE 1/2ND TAPE

There was consternation amongst the lichee owners in Wailua when we placed as many as a hundred cuttings or air layers on each of their trees. There was astonishment on their part when they found that almost every one of the one hundred air layers took and grew into a new, removable tree. We naturally flooded the market as far as they were concerned and they did turn over all of the trees to us. These in turn were paid for by the HSPA [Hawaiian Sugar Planters' Association] tree nursery and were turned over to the general public--were distributed to the general public. This lot of trees, consisting of some five or six hundred, were the first real start of the lichee on Kauai which has given Kauai, perhaps, the most trees per family of any of the islands.

I mentioned that we hunted a good deal in the Waimea Canyon area. I'd like to comment that this goes back to the day when there were wild cattle in the Kokee area and when the plains and hillsides above and around Kokee were open areas with few trees and practically no undergrowth. The heavy population of wild cattle had destroyed practically all vegetation. A decision had been made to remove all wild cattle from the area and our hunting saw the last of the animals--the wild cattle--removed. It's been interesting to note that the forest has grown back completely, the native forest has recovered, the native shrubs--maile, et cetera--have all come back. And it is also interesting to note that the native birds have increased tremendously over the years. The birds which were certainly facing extinction in those days are now on the increase and should be safe for all time under the protection of the state park system.

I'd like to comment that there were no blackberries in these early days. The forests were open and there were no blackberry bushes to bother one when walking in most any direction. The blackberry was brought to Kauai by David Larsen, the manager of Kilauea Sugar Company. It was known as the Hungarian blackberry and grew beautifully at his mountain home in Kokee. It wasn't long before it was noticed that the birds were spreading the blackberry very rapidly and unfortunately nothing was done to stop it until it was too late. The blackberry now is the biggest detriment to the shrubbery and forests of the area in that it has blanketed the undergrowth completely in most all of the Kokee area.

Fruit flies were unknown in the early days. Going back to about 1908 or 1909, there were no fruit flies to bother the fruit of the islands and we enjoyed eating guavas, citrus, mangoes, et cetera without the worry of a worm from the fruit fly. The Mediterranean fruit fly came in shortly after this period. It was never really extensive in its operation and it wasn't until the Oriental fruit fly was brought in during the last World War that most of our island fruit has been destroyed before reaching maturity. I can remember growing tomatoes and melons without ever worrying about a fruit fly.

I could comment, perhaps, on the early years of the last war [World War II], especially when the first troops arrived. They were the Fighting 69th from New York City and consisted mostly of officers with political appointments and a rank and file of individuals who were not particularly interested in being soldiers. They called themselves the Fighting 69th. We changed the name to the Frightened 69th, as they certainly were scared of their shadow. They were replaced by the 213th Field Artillery from the Utah-Idaho area and this was a splendid group of officers and men.

Being connected with the plantation, there were naturally a lot of contacts between the service personnel and the plantation personnel and we did our best to help when we could. I would like to mention that when Grove Farm built an underground storage system for ammunition tunnels for the artillery and were subsequently told that they had stored gas shells in the area, the area was fenced off and there was a guard post building where a squad of men slept while certain of the men were on guard duty. I remember driving past the guard house one day and noting that all the bunks had disappeared. I asked the sentry on duty what had happened to the setup and why the men had moved out. His comment was, Oh no, they had moved the bunks into the tunnels. It was much more comfortable and dry and warmer in there. I asked him if he realized that there were gas shells and that one leaking shell could mean the end of the whole crew. He did not know this but I noticed that that afternoon the bunks were all back out in the bunkhouse.

We had another humorous incident happen here in this same general area when the artillery stored real explosive shells over the hill from our quarry. We warned them that occasionally one of our dynamite charges would break loose and throw rocks in all directions and it was conceivable that a rock would go over the hill into their ammunition storage area. They knew better, being soldiers, and paid no attention to us. We sent the crew on duty in the ammunition dump warning before we fired the next round of explosives and, sure enough, one of the charges sprung loose

and threw a huge boulder over the hill and down into the middle of the ammunition dump. It was interesting that the two officers in charge who I had talked to previously and warned previously were sitting in a command car when the rock in question came down through the hood and whipped the engine of the command car back under the car with the two men still sitting in it. They were both quite white in complexion when I saw them come over the hill. (chuckles) It actually happened. Oh, it just scared the devil out of them. It was noticed that the ammunition storage dump disappeared within a day.

Well, talk a little bit about McDenner's jackass. When he shot the jackass.

V: Who?

M: McDenner. Do you remember McDenner?

V: No, I haven't heard that one.

M: I'll put that one in. We had some characters here with us during the war, enough so that it would fill a book. I'd like to comment on one who was with the provost marshall's staff, a man by the name of McDenner who was quite an obnoxious individual at times. The story is told, and it is a true story and is in poetry, of the time when McDenner was driving near the Bonham Airfield at Kekaha [formerly Barking Sands Field] with his vehicle blacked out. He heard a noise and ordered his driver to stop. McDenner got out of the vehicle and challenged the noise to halt, which it failed to do, and after proper challenging McDenner fired two shots. There was a thrashing and crashing and commotion and the end result was a dead jackass lying on the road. The story and poem of McDenner and his ass is one which still lives and will forever on Kauai. In fact, it was so humorous that he requested transfer elsewhere.

This also reminds me of the time Charlie [Charles J.] Fern put an article in the Garden Island about the time a certain colonel was to meet a general at the plane. The colonel had been unable to get his polished boots on because his feet had swollen and they were too tight. He failed to meet the general, in the story, and this did cause quite a commotion. The humorous part of it was that Charlie had printed a special single copy of the newspaper with this article on the front page and had [sent it to the colonel, who was in the doghouse because the general didn't believe his story.]

END OF SIDE 1/2ND TAPE

END OF INTERVIEW

Transcribed and edited by Katherine B. Allen

NOTE: p. 7 Jean F. Widdifield Moragne majored in home economics at the University of Hawaii.

p. 17 Charles James Fern remembers a McDonough, rather than a McDenner, who was with the provost marshall's staff.

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